5.

THE NECESSITY OF RECEIVING THE Holy Sacrament;

(That great Test both of the *Christian* and *Protestant* Religion)

Declared in a SERMON, at a CONFERENCE of the several Ministers of the Deanery of *Braughin* in the County of *Hertford*, appointed by the Right Reverend Father in God, HENRY Lord Bishop of *London*, to be held at *Ware*, *August* 28. 1678.

By ROBERT NEVILLE, B. D. Rector of *Ansty*.

LONDON, Printed by *J. D.* for *Benj. Billingsly*, at the Printing-Press in *Cornhil* near the Royal Exchange, 1679.

LICENSED.

May 20. 1679. *W. JANE.*

To the Worſhipfull,

My much honoured Kinſman,

James Wilymot, Eſq.

OF

Chelſull in the County of *Hertford.*

Honoured SIR,

Am ſo big with the Reſentments of your multiplied and repeated Favours, that I am in pain till I am delivered of them in Public Acknowledgments; and have therefore choſe rather to expoſe my own weakneſs to the World (by making this Diſcourſe Publick) than be ungrateful to you; deſigning not ſo much the Publication of my Sermon, as my Gratitude: when (at the Command of our Right Reverend and Noble Dioceſan) I preached this Sermon, you were pleaſed to do me the honour to ride ſome miles to be an Auditor of it. What was then preſented to your Ear, I now place before your Eye; not that I flatter my ſelf to ſerve the ends of my Reputation by it: for I am too well aſſured that thoſe Diſcourſes, which (in the hearing) went down with a tolerable

relish, are often found flat and insipid in the reading, especially when they are leisurely and critically considered by Persons of Judgment and Understanding. I have read of a young Gentleman of Athens, *who being to plead for his Life, hired an Orator to make him a Defensive Oration to be pronounced before the Judges, which (at the first reading) was very grateful and pleasing to the Young-man; but when by reading it often (that he might fix it in his memory, and speak it with the better grace) he began to nauseate, and grow weary of it; the Orator bid him consider that the Judges and the People were to hear it but once, and then it was probable they might (at the first instant) hear it with as much delight and satisfaction, as he himself had done. This Story hath often represented to my mind the Fate of my Sermon, which is now stript of the Advantages it had in the Delivery; but however I can dispense with my own Credit, and give my self sufficient satisfaction in that particular; because I have sent it into the World upon no other Errand, than to put me into a capacity of making a solemn and publick profession that I am,*

Honoured Sir,

Your much obliged Kinsman,

Ansty, May 15.
1679.

faithful and humble Servant,

Robert Neville.

A SERMON PREACHED At a CONFERENCE at *Ware*, *August* 28. 1678.

LUKE 22. latter part of the 19 verse.

---This Do in Remembrance of Me.

The whole verse runs thus: *And he took Bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my Body, which is given for you; This do in Remembrance of Me.*

THE Holy Sacrament was in such great esteem and veneration in former Ages, that in *Can.* 21 of the Council of *Illiberis*, the keeping Men from it was thought an heavy Punishment, as appears by these words of the Canon, (a) *That if any absented himself from the Church for three Sundays, he was ta*

(a) Quod si quis per tres Dies Dominicos ad Ecclesiam non accesserit, &c.

to be kept as long from the Holy Sacrament, that he might thereby seem punish'd and corrected for it. And it was decreed by the Council at *Aken*, in the Year 836, *That the Sacrament should be administred every Lord's day, lest they who stand off from the Sacrament of their Redemption, should be kept also at as great a Distance from Redemption it self.* And St. *Basil* (in his 289 Epistle *ad Cæsaream Patritiam*) commends an every-day Communion as (*b*) good and profitable. A sense whereof caused St. *Cyril* of *Jerusalem* to invite Guests to this Feast in these words, (*c*) *Eat the Bread, that renews your Nature; drink the Wine, that is the Smile and Delight of Immortality.* And St. *Cyril* of *Alexandria* tells us, (*d*) *That to drink of the Sacramental Wine, is to drink of the Blood of Jesus, to be partakers of the Lord's Incorruptibility.* And Holy *Ignatius* (in his Epistle to the *Ephesians*) calls the Sacramental Bread (*e*) *The Medicine of Immortality, An Antidote against Death, A Purge that expels all evil.* And the Fathers of the *Nicene* Council style the two Elements of the Sacrament, (*f*) *the Symbols of our Resurrection.* And at this rate did several of the Antient Fathers speak of it. And I could heartily wish that the generality of Men had the same opinion of the Sacrament in this, as they had in former Ages; and that they would not exercise the power of the Keys against, and excommunicate themselves, by their wilful Absence from this Holy Feast. And since the Heathens had their Αἰάκεια καὶ Αἰάντεια, their Feasts in memory of their

(*b*) Καλὸν καὶ ἐπωφελές.

(*c*) Φάγετε ἄρτον ἀνακαινοποιοῦντα τὴν φύσιν, πίετε οἶνον ἀθανασίας γάνυσμα.

(*d*) Πιεῖν τὸ αἷμα Ιησοῦ, τῆς κυριακῆς μεταλαβεῖν ἀφθαρσίας.

(*e*) Φάρμακον ἀθανασίας ἀντίδοτον τοῦ μὴ ἀποθανεῖν, καθαρτήριον ἀλεξίκακον.

(*f*) σύμβολα τῆς ἡμετέρας ἀναστάσεως.

their Heroes, *Æacus* and *Ajax*; and the Israelites their Passover (a Type of this our Feast) in memory of their Deliverance in *Egypt*; let us Christians celebrate this Memorial Feast, which our Saviour did institute in these words, *This Do in remembrance of Me.*

Before I contrive the words into a Proposition, I shall first resolve this Question; How Christ could, at the eating the last Supper with his Disciples, with whom he was present, bid them Do this in remembrance of him? how could they be said to do that in Remembrance of his Death, which was then future, and to come? For if we do an Action in remembrance of any thing, it must be of a thing that is past; or, if in remembrance of any Person, it must be either of a Person absent from us, or of one departed this life.

To which I answer, That it follows only from these words, that Christ instituted and appointed a Sacrament, or Figurative, mysterious Representation of a thing; which, in the whole use of it, was variable, either to this day, to morrow, or any other day; and therefore never to be naturally verified, but on the Cross, by a Proper and Natural Presence; because then it was so, and never else: In Remembrance of which his being and suffering on the Cross, we do this Holy Action, We do this in Remembrance of Him.

The importance of which words may be compri-

zed

zed in this Propoſition: That this Holy Action of receiving the *Sacrament*, in Remembrance of Chriſt's Death and Paſſion, is a Duty incumbent upon every Chriſtian; every Chriſtian is bound to Do this in remembrance of him; and that for theſe following Reaſons:

I. Becauſe Chriſt, who did inſtitute and appoint it, requires it of us; whoſe Command is of that extent and latitude, as to comprehend all Chriſtians. 'Tis true indeed, that the Apoſtles only were preſent at Chriſt's firſt Celebration, and ſo the Command was directed to them: But how? not to the Apoſtles only as Apoſtles, but alſo as Communicants, as repreſenting the People; or elſe to the Apoſtles, as Diſpenſers; and to the People, as Receivers: For, if the Officers and Miniſters of the Church are bound to give it, all Chriſtians (no doubt) are bound to receive it: and that they are obliged ſo to do, St. Paul hath fully and plainly declared to us; telling us in 1 *Cor.* 11. 24. that when our Lord had given thanks, he brake the Bread, and ſaid, *Take, eat, this is my Body, which is broken for you; Do this in Remembrance of me.* Here this Command [*Do this*] immediately refers to theſe words, [*Take, eat*] which the verſe of my Text hath not; and therefore it muſt there refer only to taking Bread, giving Thanks, breaking it, and giving it to them; in which the Apoſtles and their Succeſſors, were more immediately concerned; and none

can

can do this, *i. e.* take Bread, give Thanks, break it, and give it, but they; but in the other actions of taking, and eating, all Christians are concerned.

The Receiving the Sacrament is not a thing Arbitrary or Indifferent, to be done, or not done, at our pleasure, because it is under the Obligation of a Positive Command, which our Saviour hath given us in these words, *This Do in remembrance of me*; that is, Do this in remembrance that I put a cloud of Flesh upon my bright and resplendent Glory; In remembrance that I, who am the Light of the World, suffered my self to be put into the dark Lanthorn of an Human Body; In remembrance of my bitter Pains and Sufferings on the Cross; In remembrance of the stretching out of my Arms on the Tree of Shame, to receive and imbrace You; In remembrance of the opening of my Side, to make an avenue and passage for You to my Heart; In remembrance of my pouring out Water to wash You, and Blood to redeem You.

Memorials of Dying Men are of great account with all Men, being placed among their κειμήλια, their most valued and esteemed Treasures: And we usually say, That the words of a Dying Man make the strongest and deepest impressions in the minds of the Living: Be pleased therefore to bribe your Fancy, to suppose One, who had always been a loving and indulgent Husband, now lying upon his Death-

bed, and the very moment before his Soul is divorced from his Body, and he from his Wife by Death, making this his last and dying request to her; "I perceive the last Sand of my Glass is now running, "and my time of Departure is near at hand, let me "therefore beg this last favour of thee, and desire "thee to keep my Picture by thee when I am dead "and gone; let me desire thee to do this in remembrance of me: Undoubtedly his Wife, if she had but the least spark of kindness for him, would keep his Picture by her, as a most valuable Treasure; and when ever she beholds it, pay him, whom it represents, the just Tribute of a Tear. The Church is Christ's Spouse, and the Sacrament is the Picture of Christ's Death drawn to the Life; and if Christ, a little before his Death, desires, nay more, commands his Spouse, the Church, for whom he was about to die, and shed his most precious Blood, to commemorate his Death after his Suffering and Crucifixion, and break Bread, and drink Wine, in remembrance that his Body was broken, and his Blood poured out; call to mind his bloody Passion by that holy Action, certainly if she hath any bowels of Compassion in her, she cannot deny his so just and reasonable request; she cannot disobey so obliging a Command.

If this Sacrament could have well been spared, and Men could have kept the Law of the Inward-Man without it, our Saviour, who came to beat

down all the Rites and Ceremonies of the Old Law, would never have raised up this under the Gospel; but he knew it necessary, and therefore left it upon Record, as binding as a Law; 1 Cor. 11. 25. *This do ye, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.* As *oft as ye do it*, implies a doing it often; and does not leave it at large to our will and pleasure, to be taken up at the discretion of every private person; but supposeth that it must be done frequently, as frequently at least as that Church, whereof we are Members, requires it of us.

Had our Saviour imposed upon us a heavy Yoke of Judaical Rites, and laborious and expensive Ceremonies, and crowded them in so thick and fast upon us, as to employ and take up all our time, and exhaust our strength, we had had some tolerable Plea for our disobedience; But when he hath freed us from the burdensom imposition of Judaical Observances, and (except that of Baptism) hath recommended but one innocent, cheap, and easie Rite to our observation; We are Monsters of Ingratitude if we take not the most solemn notice of it, and yeeld not our best and most chearful Obedience to this his peculiar Command; A Command in so peculiar a manner His, as no other is but that of Baptism. For his other Commands are but inforcements of those Precepts, that are either contained in the Old Testament, or derived to us from Principles of Nature; but this

is his Peculiar, his own proper Commandment: and our Receiving the Sacrament in obedience to it, is the proper Characteristical mark of a Christian, the very Test of our Christianity: for Christ is concern'd in no piece of Worship so much as this. This is most properly Christian Worship than any other Act of Religion. Shall we not then observe this Mandate, obey this Command, and enjoy this Privilege properly belonging to his Disciples? This, this it was that caused the *Christians* of old, when for their Sins they were debarr'd and excluded, to lament their condition in large showers of Tears, and sadly bewail their banishment from the Lord's Table: This was esteemed the highest Honour the Κατηχόμενοι could receive, when (after long attendance, and strict examination) they were permitted to commence, and take the Degree of *Fideles*, and admitted into the Society of Communicants, into the Fellowship and Communion of Saints.

2. This Holy Action of receiving the Sacrament in Remembrance of *Christ's* Death and Passion, is a Duty incumbent upon every *Christian*, because this was the practice of the most Apostolical and Primitive Times, which is a good Comment upon *Christ's* Intentions, and a clear discovery of the Obligatory Power of this Command.

They who were the immediate Auditors of *Christ* and his Apostles, had certainly the best Notion of the im-

import of this Command; and the Notion they had of it, made them as constantly do this, as they assembled together either to eat, drink, or confer together in love and friendship: And the 46th verse of the 2d of the *Acts* seems to intimate to us that the Church of *Jerusalem* receiv'd the Sacrament every day, and that *they continued daily with one accord in the Temple, and breaking Bread at home, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart*; that is, after they had daily performed their common Devotions with the *Jews* in the Temple, they (because the *Jews* would not then permit them to do it in the Temple) went to their own Houses, to tender a more peculiar Service to *Christ*, by *doing this in remembrance of him*. But the principal time for this Holy Exercise seems to have been on the Lord's Day: for we reade, *Acts* 20. 7. that the Disciples were assembled on the first day of the week to break Bread. And as in the Apostolical, so in the next succeeding Times, they often met together to do this; and while the Spirit of *Christianity* was yet warm and vigorous, it is more than probable they did communicate every day, or as often as they came together to the Publick Worship; insomuch that the *Canons* (g) *Apostolical*, and the (*h*) *Synod* of *Antioch* threatned those persons with Excommunication, who resorted to the Public Assemblies to hear the Scriptures, and departed from them without this Spiritual Food. This custom of communicating every day

(g) Canon 9.
(*h*) Canon 2.

day was of no short continuance in the Church, and some Churches, and particularly the Western, did retain it longer than others. And St. *Cyprian* assures us that it was practis'd in his time, saying (i) *We receive the Eucharist every day, as the food of our Salvation.* The like St. *Ambrose* reports of *Millain*, where he was Bishop. And St. *Hierom* affirms, that this custom was in use in his time at *Rome*. And St. *Augustin* intimates, that in the Age in which he lived it was not wholly disused and laid aside. In the Eastern Churches this custom disappeared sooner than in the Western, though more or less, according to the ebbing or flowing of their Zeal. And St. *Basil* (k) positively affirms, that in his time they did communicate four times a week, namely, on the Lord's-day, Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday, and upon other days, (l) if the memory of any Martyr were celebrated upon them. Afterwards, as Religion began to be in her Wane and Decrease, this Sacrament was more and more discontinued, and from a daily was first changed into a weekly, and then into a monthly Service, and afterward performed but thrice a Year, at *Christmass*, *Easter*, and upon *Whitsunday*; and even at these three great Festivals it is now by many lukewarm *Christians* neglected and disregarded: for (to speak the truth) we have much degenerated from the Devotion of the *Primitive Christians*; and are taught of late to idolize Preaching, and value our selves

(i) Eucharistiam quotidiè ad cibum salutis accipimus. *Cypr.* de Oratione Dominicâ. p. 268.

(k) ἡμεῖς μὲν τοίνυν τέτταρσιν καθ' ἑκάστην ἑβδομάδα κοινωνοῦμεν. *Basil* in 289 Epist. ad *Cæsaream Patritiam*.

(l) ἐὰν ἡ μνήμη μάρτυρός τινος. *Basil.* ibid.

selves from our much Hearing; being like that People called *Cerinandi*, whose Ear (as Historians tell us) covered their whole Body. The Epidemical Disease of this Age, being the Rickets of Religion; or the having great Heads, Heads swell'd, and big with Knowledg (falsely so called) but their Legs weak and impotent, not able to walk in the ways of God's Commandments. Prayer, and the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, must strike sail to Sermons; & because Men are too feeble in Spirituals to prepare themselves for it, they are unwilling to come to this holy Feast; and perswade themselves that Superstition did eat out the heart of true Religion in the Primitive times, and that then Men did come so frequently to eat with Christ at his Table, only in a Complement, and Complaisance, and flatter and wheadle their Saviour with a superfluous and needless Devotion, and therefore they will not do this once a year, nay some of them scarce once in all their lives. But let me advise such, not to dare to neglect Christ's gracious Invitation, nor disobey his Command, of *doing this in remembrance of him*: for not only Acts, but Omissions are evil. It is a Sin to contemn the Sacrament, and a Sin not to receive it when we may: the one leads to the other: Neglect and Indifferency (as we have seen by woful experience) terminate at last in open Prophaneness. If we had a true esteem of the Cup of Blessings, we should thirst more after it:

it: but the truth is, our thoughts are ſeldom or never imployed upon the conſideration of thoſe many Benefits and Advantages we receive by it. And this brings me to the third Reaſon, why this holy Action of Receiving the Sacrament in Remembrance of Chriſt's Death and Paſſion, is a Duty incumbent upon every Chriſtian. And that is,

III. Becauſe 'tis fraught with many Benefits and Advantages; this is not an empty barren Ceremony, or an unprofitable Rite, it hath a large train of Bleſſings attending on it. And

1. It makes us participate of *Chriſt*, and his Grace and Spirit. The external Act indeed only declares *Chriſt*'s Death in Rite and Ceremony; but the worthy communicating of it, makes us feed upon *Chriſt*, and unites him to our Souls, and makes us to become one Spirit, according to thoſe words of St. *Ambroſe*, (*m*) *Thou receiveſt the Sacrament as the ſimilitude of Chriſt's Body, but thou ſhalt withal obtain the Grace and Vertue of the true Nature.* The Elements of Bread and Wine in the Sacrament are not (as ſome tell us) only Symbols of mutual Charity, Allegorical Admonitions of Chriſtian Mortification, and Rites inſtituted, only to ſtir up Faith, by way of Object and Repreſentation; this were to imbrace a meer Cloud inſtead of the true *Juno*, the true Deity: Thoſe Names, and Appellations, which the Scripture gives them, ſpeak them to be more than ſo; ſuch as are the Body and Blood of the

(*m*) In ſimilitudinem quidem accipis Sacramentum, ſed veræ naturæ gratiam virtutemque conſequêris. *Ambroſ.* de Sacramento.

the Lord, the communication of his Body, and the communication of his Blood; all which intimate no less to us than a real change in the Elements, and that *Christ* is really present there; and though we must never hope to have our sight so acute, as the *Romanists* tell us theirs is, when, through that strange glass of *Transubstantiation*, they pretend to see and discern the very Flesh and Blood of *Christ*; yet we must not entertain such mean thoughts of them, as to think them only bare signs of what *Christ* did for us; but firmly believe that they exhibit *Christ* himself to all worthy Communicants.

2. A second Benefit or Advantage of the Sacrament is, That it quickens, strengthens, and encreases our Faith: All Habits are encreased by often repeated Acts: Now this Sacrament requires frequent and great Exercises of our Faith, by fixing it upon its proper Object, a Crucified Saviour; and it being (as *St. Cyril* of *Jerusalem* tells us) (*n*) A Representation of Christ's Sufferings, makes us seal to that Truth, which he hath signed and sealed with his Blood, and make a publick profession of our Faith in the virtue and merits of it: For the Sacraments (as one saith well) are nothing else but *Protestationes Fidei*, the publick Protestations of our Faith. They who come to the Lord's Table, by their very coming do publickly profess, that they believe

(*n*) σημαντικὸς ὑπὲρ παθημάτων. Catech. 23

not only every Article of their Faith, but also every part of this Divine Promise and Institution, by which Christ will renew, strengthen and establish his Covenant to every worthy Receiver. Nor is our coming to the Sacrament our Protestation only of our Faith, but also of our Repentance, which,

3. Is hugely advantaged and promoted by the Sacrament: for we cannot certainly but repent with all speed of our Sins, when we consider that they were the Spears that pierced our Saviour's side, the Nails that fastned him to the Cross; and that they laid such loads of Wrath upon the shoulders of Omnipotency it self, as made him complain and sweat, groan and die: it being impossible for any Man ever to have such a sense of, and sorrow for Sin, as when he is awakened by the signs and images of Christ's Sufferings, and when he sees it writ and decypher'd in Characters of Blood: so that our receiving the Sacrament, which commemorates *Christ's* Death and Sufferings, is a Protestation of our repenting of those Sins of ours, which most Jewishly crucifi'd the Lord of Glory.

The *Canonist* will tell us, *Sacramentum & mortis Articulus æquiparantur*, that we are considered at the Sacrament, as on our Death-bed: Now on our Death-bed we repent of our Sins, then we lay down our Malice, then we nauseat our Lust, then we go out of and re-

renounce the World, then we quarrel with *Mammon*; then we are meek, humble, and tractable; then we are commonly what we ſhould be in Health: Now if we conſider our ſelves at the Holy Table, as on our Death-bed, we ſhall undoubtedly repent of our Sins, and drown them in the Blood, and nail them to the Croſs of our Saviour: and if ſo, then this Sacrament may very well (notwithſtanding what ſome extravagant Fancies may ſuggeſt to the contrary) deſerve the name of a *Converting Ordinance*; that is, ſuch an Ordinance as God makes uſe of to turn Men from Sin to Holineſs; towards which nothing can contribute more, than that ſolemn Obligation which all Worthy Communicants lay upon themſelves at the Lord's Table, to forſake their Sins, and lead holy Lives: there being nothing imaginable that can ſeem a more probable and proper Inſtrument, to convert Men from a wicked to an holy Life, than the ſacred Remembrance that Chriſt's Death was deſigned to be the Death of Sin, and the Life of Holineſs.

4. A fourth Benefit or Advantage of the Sacrament is, That it enlarges and enflames our Love, our Charity: whether it be,

Firſt, Divine Love, or the Love of God:

Or,

Secondly, The Love of our Neighbour.

First, It enlarges and enflames our Love of God: For, by the commemoration of *Christ*'s Death in the Sacrament, we imprint in our Memories that Heroic Act, that never yet did enoble the ſtory of any Perſon, namely, Chriſt's laying down his Life for his Enemies; the Lamb of God his dying for Wolves, for thoſe that would have devoured him: So that if the Poet's Fancy of *Deucalion* and *Pyrrha* were verified in us, and we, like the Men and Women in their days, were made of Stone, yet theſe Marbles could not but weep, theſe cold ſtones could not but be warm'd with the Fire of Divine Love, ſtruck out of them by the conſideration of *Chriſt*'s great Love to us, expreſt by that Gift he gave to obtain our Pardon, namely, his Life: This was ſuch a tranſcendent Act of Love as no *Romance* of Friendſhip did ever yet fancy or ſuppoſe. We may have heard of two Companions that would die for each other, and that never quarrel'd in their Lives but for this, who ſhould ſuffer firſt, to ſave the other, and ſtrove only for Death and Execution: But for a Perſon in the Trinity to leave his Heaven, to come down to us, to dwell with Agonies, that he might free us from Torments: This was an Act of Love fit for Ecſtaſies of Apprehenſion! there were never ſuch wounds of Love as thoſe that tore his Heart; never ſuch meltings of Affection and Goodneſs, as diſſolved

Chriſt

Christ into ſweats of Blood. Let us look on our Saviour in the Garden, and on Mount *Calvari*, and we ſhall find him there in as great Agonies of Affection as of Tormeut, and hanging down his head upon the Croſs, with Languiſhments of Kindneſs, more than Weakneſs. Now ſuch Meditations of Christ's Love to us as theſe, does receiving the Sacrament ſuggeſt to us; and if (as undoubtedly it is) Love is the beſt Loadſtone to attract Love; the doing this Holy Action cannot but kindle in us that Holy Paſſion of Divine Love: Nor will it ſtop here, but proceed:

Secondly, To nouriſh and encreaſe the Love of our Neighbour: For it being the Commemoration of his Paſſion, who was the perfect Mirror of Love, it cannot but kindle and enflame our Loves to one another, which is an expreſſion of our Love to God: For, 1 *John* 4. 12. *If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his Love is perfected in us.* Chriſt died for his Enemies, and ſhall not the Commemoration thereof teach us to love ours? When the King of *Moab* was preſſed hard by the *Iſraelites* and *Edomites*, he took his own Son, and offered him as an Holocauſt upon the Wall, whereupon they preſently raiſed the Siege: So God hath offered up his Son, as an Holocauſt, as a Sacrifice for us; and can we chooſe then, when we commemorate that his Oblation in the

Sacra-

Sacrament, but raiſe the Siege, and ceaſe from quarrelling and fighting with our Enemies, and do them all the good Offices of Love and Kindneſs. *Epictetus* hath ingeniouſly obſerved, That * every thing in the World hath two handles; one turned towards us, which we may eaſily take; the other turned from us, harder to be laid hold of: the firſt makes all things eaſy, the ſecond does not. The inſtance he brings fits my preſent purpoſe; "Be it "(ſays he) that thy Brother hath offended thee; "there are two handles, one of the offence, the o- "ther of thy Brother: if thou take hold of that of "the Offence, it will be too hot for thee; but if of "that of thy Brother, it will make all his behaviour "towards thee ſo tolerable, as to continue him ſtill "the Object of thy Love. There is no part of our Brother's carriage towards us, but (if we examin it) we ſhall find ſome handle, ſome circumſtance, that may reconcile our Love to it; if we can find no other, that of our Saviour's dying for his moſt virulent, bitter, and malicious Enemies, will accompliſh and effect it. "For (ſays St. *Chryſoſtom*) didſt "thou know that thy Brother intended particular "Miſchief againſt thee, that he would even embrue "his hand in thy Blood, * kiſs that very hand; for "the Lord Chriſt did not refuſe to kiſs that very "Mouth, that made the Bargain for his Blood:

* πᾶν πρᾶγμα δυὸς ἔχει λαβάς.

* Αὐτὴν φίλησον τὴν δεξιάν.

The

The Effuſion whereof we commemorate by pouring out the Sacramental Wine. Now this Love of his requires the beſt of our Love by way of Compenſation; and he hath made our Brethren Letters of Attourney to receive that Debt of our Love which is due to him.

And thus having muſter'd up all the Arguments, to enforce the Neceſſity of receiving the Sacrament, which the time allotted to this Diſcourſe would allow of: I ſhall now remove ſome of the principal Objections, which are urged by ſome, to diſcourage both themſelves and others from this neceſſary and holy Duty.

The firſt Objection is, that of their own *Unworthineſs*, which (they ſay) frights them from this holy Feaſt.

To which let me return this Anſwer, that though they pretend Fear to be a Bridle in their Mouths, that hinders them from eating, yet I am apt to believe this but a bare pretence; becauſe they are not afraid of thoſe things, which (I am ſure) have more evil and danger in them, than the doing this holy Action can ever be ſuppoſed to have; for they are not afraid to break a poſitive Command of Chriſt's, which requires them to do this in remembrance of him. They

are

are not afraid to live in the known Sins of Schism, Faction, Covetousness, Uncharitableness, Disobedience to their Governours both in Church and State; and yet they are afraid to do a necessary Duty, which Christ himself requires of them. They make their Unworthiness a Plea for their not coming, but who is culpable and blameable for it? Is it not to be charged upon themselves alone? Is it not because they are unwilling to take a Survey of their Consciences, and examin themselves? Is it not because they are so in love with Sin, as to think it hath a better Gusto than this blessed Feast? O let not these sad Wretches put such Cheats upon themselves, as to pretend, that the thoughts of their Unworthiness fright them from it, of which if they were truly sensible, they would not remain so unworthy; but (as the Apostle adviseth) 1 *Cor.* 11. 28. *First examin themselves, and then eat of that Bread, and drink of that Cup.* Let them not therefore spin such fine Threads of Hypocrisy, as to deceive their own Eyes; for their Unworthiness is no sufficient reason to keep them from this Duty, unless they are resolved to continue in that state without Repentance. The sick Man is not unworthy of Physic, because he is sick, but because he flings away his Physic, and defies all Remedies and Medicines that may restore him to Health; and if this be the state of these Men in

Spiri-

Spirituals, they are then indeed unfit to come to the Holy Table: But if they are desirous to purge away their sins by repentance, and lead a new life for the future, they may, nay, they are obliged to participate of this Holy Feast; and are as worthy of it, as the Wounded Man is of Healing Balsam, or the Sick Man of Physick; that is, they want it; and Christ invites them to come, that they may receive such supplies as are suitable to their Wants and Necessities.

Secondly; A second Objection against coming to the Sacrament, is this; That it is often seen, that Men break those Resolutions against Sin after the Sacrament, which they made in so solemn a manner before they received it; and that therefore they will not come to it, lest by breaking those Vows and Promises of a Reformation, which they made to God before receiving, they should enflame their Reckoning, encrease their Sins, and thereby exasperate God the more against them.

To which I answer; That though Men should by chance break their resolutions of amendment, after the Sacred Solemnity is over, yet let not that fright them from a second Celebration of it, but induce them rather to frequent it the more; that they may

obtain that ſtrength by a frequent repetition of this Action, which could not be had from one ſingle Act; there being a greater Probability of their ſtanding firm, and not relapſing into Sin, if they receive often, than if they receive ſeldom or not at all; eſpecially if they conſider, that their not receiving is it ſelf a Sin, a Sin of Omiſſion, a breach of a poſitive Command of Chriſt's, who requires their Preſence at his Holy Table; to which if they come prepared by Self-examination, and with a ſincere Reſolution of their Souls to lead a new Life, they will find their Graces ſtrengthned, their Faith quickned, their Hope encreaſed, their Charity enflamed, and their whole Inward-Man repaired by it; and that the oftner they receive the Sacrament, the more fit they will be to receive; this Sacrament being more ſuitable to the weak than the ſtrong, tho needful for both: and it is more than probable, that Mens weakneſs is the effect of their feeding ſo ſeldom on it, and permitting thoſe Recruits and Reinforcements they had received by it, decay and languiſh, before they were renewed by a freſh repaſt. To which I may alſo ſuperadd, that by the ſame Argument by which Men diſcourage themſelves from the Sacrament, they may alſo fright themſelves from the duty of Repentance, without which there is no Salvation upon Goſpel-terms: For whenever

even I repent, I must, after I have asked God pardon for my former Sins, promise and resolve to serve him with better Obedience for the future, if I would obtain Pardon of him. And do we not find by woful experience, that we break those Promises we make even in our most solemn Repentance, and consequently incur God's Displeasure by that breach of Promise? And what then, must we not repent, because we sometimes fall back from our Repentance, and either forget, or break our Promises? Certainly we ought rather to repent again of that our breach of Promise, to repent and be sorry for the imperfections of our former Repentance: So that by the same Reason that we must not come to the Sacrament, because we often break those Vows and Promises of Amendment, that we make before we receive it, we must not also repent, because we often again return to those Sins whereof we repented, and which we resolved against at the time of our Repentance; which dangerous Opinion no Christian, who understands the purport of the second Covenant, will dare to espouse.

Thirdly; A third Objection against the Sacrament is, That Men fear they want Knowledg, and understand not aright the nature of the *Sacrament*; which if they do not, this their gross and stupid ig-

norance of a thing so easie, and withal so necessary to be understood, is inexcusable. A Subtilety in thorny Controversie, or an Ability in the intricate Mysteries of Religion are no necessary Ingredients in a Worthy Communicant; even those Heads that can neither toil about, nor spin out an Argument, may be as richly arrayed in that Knowledg that is requisite for a good Communicant, as *Solomon* in all his Glory. To qualify and fit Men for the *Sacrament*, it is not requited that they should know the Motions of the Celestial Bodies, or the Influences of the *Stars*; if they do but feel any good Motions within themselves, and how CHRIST, the bright
*Rev. 22.16. Morning-Star *, (and that this Star descended from his bright Orb of Glory, and set in a Sea of Blood to raise such black Sinners as they are to Mansions of Eternal Glory: It is not expected from a Worthy Communicant that he should dive into the depth of any new Mystery, or study for any new Notion; All that is new he is to be in quest of, is the New
‖2 Cor. 5.17. ‖Creature. Every Child (that hath but learnt his Church Catechism) can tell that the *Sacrament* was ordained *for the continual remembrance of the Sacrifice of the Death of Christ, and the Benefits we receive thereby*; and that the Reception of this *Sacrament* is the ratifying and confirming our Covenant with God; and that it is required of those who come to the

Lord's

Lord's Supper, *to examin themselves whether they repent them truly of their former Sins, stedfastly purposing to lead a new Life; have a lively Faith in God's Mercy through Jesus Christ, with a thankful remembrance of his Death, and be in Charity with all Men.* He that knows but thus much, knows enough of the nature of the Sacrament; and he that knows not this, (after so many Sermons and Catechisings that have been made upon the *Sacrament*) for this his gross and supine Ignorance, may justly be reputed such a Dunce in Christianity, as scarcely to deserve the Name of a *Christian.* And therefore if any Person be ignorant in this matter, why does he not repair to those, whose Office and Business it is to teach and inform him better? Why hath he not recourse to those, whose Lips should keep Knowledg? who (I am confident) would be glad of all opportunities to instruct those who are ignorant in this or any other kind. * Mal. 2. 7.

Fourthly. A fourth Objection against coming to the Sacrament, is a fear in Men, that when they have prepared themselves for it as well as they can, they are not yet so well prepared as they should be.

To which I answer, That if we may not come to God's Ordinances, till we are as well prepared as we should be, why then are we not afraid to pray too

to God? and why are we not afraid to hear the Word? For when we hear and pray, we do the same thing that is perform'd at the Sacrament, tho' not in so solemn a manner: So that by the same Argument that some Men scare themselves from the Sacrament, they may also fright themselves from other holy Duties, such as Praying, or Hearing the Word: For, as the Apostle saith, that *he that eats and drinks unworthily*; so it is true also, that he that prays or hears unworthily, prays and hears to himself κρίμα, Judgment, and temporal Punishments, and (if he repent not by the Admonition of those Punishments) Eternal Damnation; and as he that is not the better for the Sacrament, is certainly the worse for the Sacrament; So he that is not the better for a Sermon, is certainly the worse for a Sermon; every Sermon he hears amiss, shall rise up in Judgment against him.

Let us then prepare our selves for the Sacrament as well as we can, and God will accept of it, though it be not so well as we should; he will accept of our sincere endeavours of Preparation: And if we will not chuse to feed rather upon Doubts and Scruples, than upon the Bread of Life, we may assure our selves of a welcom to, and advantage by, this Holy Feast. Indeed if we come, like rude and unmannerly Guests, once is too often; but if we purge

and

and cleanſe our Hearts, if the ſtomach of our Souls be clean, often we may come, but we cannot come too often; Chriſt's Blood is always full of virtue and efficacy, it will put out the Fire of immoderate Anger, cool the Heart-burnings of Malice and Envy, the *Calentures* of our Luſt, quench the raging Thirſt of Covetouſneſs: If we drink of this Cup as we ought, it will keep us from drinking too frequently and immoderately of any other. Chriſt is always a Fountain of Life to thoſe who deſire to taſte the Waters of Life, at which we may draw as often as we pleaſe, if our Pitcher be clean; and the oftner we draw, our Pitcher will be the cleaner: And that it may be ſo, God grant us ſuch a ſenſe of our Saviour's Sufferings, as may create in us a juſt deteſtation of our Sins, and quicken our endeavours in the ways of Repentance, and a holy Life, till we obtain thoſe Bleſſings, which by the effuſion of his Blood he hath purchaſed for us: to whom with the Father, and the holy Spirit, be all Honour, Glory and Praiſe.

FINIS.

Books sold by Benjamin Billingsley *at the Prince's Arms in* Cornhill.

CHristian Religion's Appeal, from the groundless Prejudices of the Scoptick to the Bar of Common Reason. Wherein is proved,

1. That the Apostles did not delude the World.
2. Nor were themselves deluded.
3. Scripture Matters of Fact have the best Evidence.
4. The Divinity of Scripture is as demonstrable, as the Being and Deity. By *John Smith*, Rector of St. *Marie's* in *Colchester*. Fol. Pr.

A Sermon preached before the Right Honourable the Lord Ma and Court of Aldermen of the City of *London*, at *Guild-hall* Ch *Aug.* 18. 1678. By *Robert Neville*, B. D. late Fellow of King's C in *Cambridg*, and now Rector of *Ashly* in *Hertfordshire*. 4°. price

Of Baptism, and the Lord's Supper. Two short Discourses, o ing the Nature, Design, and Ends of those two great Gospel-O nances, and teaching the holy use and improvement of them. In Price 6 d.